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THE MECCA OF COMMUNISM

by Constantin Fotitch

In less than a year Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, has received two signal honors from the Communist world. Last December the All-Slav Congress met in this centuries-old city and chose it as headquarters for a permanent secretariat. This month an even greater distinction has been conferred upon my home town. Reviving the supposedly disbanded Comintern, the representatives of nine European Communist parties designated Belgrade as "the location for the Information Bureau and the editorial board of its organ".

Thus Belgrade becomes, after Moscow, the most important city in the Communist world. One might conclude that this is an award of gratitude for the heroic part that the "White City" played in the two World Wars for freedom and democracy. But nothing would be more misleading because the word "gratitude", even if it is found in their vocabulary, is certainly not practiced by the Communists. Moreover, Belgrade was considered by the Communists as an enemy citadel. One of Tito's leading Generals (Kocha Popovich), after the seizure of the city by the Russians, pledged to "their glorious leader" that Belgrade would pay dearly for its treason toward Tito.

In March, 1941, the Communists did everything possible to sabotage the Serbian revolution, centering in Belgrade, which swept away the Regency and overthrew the pro-Nazi Government two days after it signed the Tripartite Pact with the Axis. The Communists were the only ones to raise a dissenting voice in the jubilant city, which they flooded with pamphlets warning Yugoslavia not to be dragged by Serbian Chauvinists into a war for the defense of the British Empire and capitalism.

The citizens of Belgrade paid with 20,000 dead for having dared to defy Hitler when the Luftwaffe, on Palm Sunday, April 6, 1941, unleashed the Fuehrer's fury on the unarmed city.

For its anti-Communist attitude, Belgrade was strafed by the Allies -- at Tito's request -- on Sunday, April 16, 1944, the Eastern Orthodox Easter. Commenting on this bombardment, in which 3,000 innocent people were killed, the Official Bulletin of the British Informa-

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tion Center wrote, on April 20, 1944, that the bombardment of Belgrade demonstrated the close collaboration existing between Tito's Army of Liberation and the Allied Air Forces in Italy.

Secretary Hull to whom in my capacity as Yugoslav Ambassador I reported this tragic blunder, on April 18, 1944, did not conceal his indignation. Nevertheless, another bombardment of Belgrade by the Allied Forces followed a few days later, again at the request of Tito.

When Tito was brought into Belgrade by the Red Army, on October 19, 1944, he found an almost unanimously hostile city.

II

This, in short, is the story of the relations between Belgrade and the Communist High Command. Yet, in spite of such a clear record, Belgrade has been designated to shelter two of the most conspiratory organs in the Communist system. A greater insult to the Serbian people could not be imagined.

Considerations of high strategy in the pursuit of Soviet imperialistic aims obviously dictated the location of headquarters of both the All-Slav Congress and the revived Comintern at Belgrade. With its unique position in the heart of southeastern Europe, Belgrade is the natural choice of Moscow as the principal outpost from which to exert pressure in the drive towards Italy and the eastern Mediterranean.

The importance of Belgrade, and Yugoslavia as a whole, in Soviet post-war policy was clearly demonstrated by Stalin's wartime preoccupation with imposing a Communist regime upon that country. The unabated propaganda for Tito, which the Western Allies so naively accepted, emanated from the radio station called "Free Yugoslavia" which was located as operating from Tiflis, in the Caucasus.

One of the most important concessions which Stalin gained at his first meeting with Churchill and Roosevelt, in Tehran, was agreement "that the Partisans in Yugoslavia should be supported by supplies and equipment to the greatest possible extent and also by commando operations". This amounted to the shameful abandonment of Mihailovich, considered by the Communists, quite rightly, as their principal and most powerful enemy.

Military necessity was the excuse of the Western Allies for the generous help thus extended to Tito, who immediately after the cessation of hostilities was to become their most treacherous enemy. In a letter addressed to me on November 3, 1944, President Roosevelt wrote: "Our military aid to the resistance forces has been directed against the common enemy, and the allocation of that aid has been determined by military consideration."

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III

"Tito is fighting the Germans" was the principal theme of the Soviet propaganda, faithfully echoed by American and British fellow travellers. He was credited by the Soviet operated station at Tiflis with killing hundreds of Germans daily.

One of the very competent American military authorities on the Balkans, Colonel Robert McDowell, in a public statement said: "The communiques by the Communist-led forces consistently presented a false picture of military operations. The Communist communiques of their operations against Germans and German communications proved themselves so consistently untrustworthy that their evidence was finally deemed worthless."

Yet, in spite of such accurate appraisal of the value of Tito's contribution, American military assistance was extended to him in ever increasing quantities. Meantime, Stalin's orders to Tito were strict and definite. Yugoslavia had to be preserved for exclusive Soviet domination. It represented a key position in the Soviet plans, for it is from Yugoslavia that the Communists will press on to the west and to the south in their drive for the domination of Europe.

Moscow then helped him to fasten his grip on the country by terroristic methods unsurpassed in any other countries under Soviet domination. NKVD specialists were brought in to eliminate all democratic opposition while Russian military experts worked to speed up the organization of the Yugoslav forces, part of whom were already well armed by American taxpayers. Today, when Yugoslavia is surrounded (except on the Greek border) either by defeated enemies or by Soviet satellites, the Yugoslav armed forces are maintained at the impressive figure of nearly 600,000 men.

IV

If there are still some Americans who are inclined to minimize the importance of the latest Communist move -- the establishment of the new Communist "Information Bureau" -- they should be advised to read Tito's speech of September 28, 1947, at the Congress of the Peoples' Front in Belgrade. This speech came after the secret meeting of the nine European Communist parties and gives the most useful cue as to the significance of the new organization.

In this speech Tito openly advocated the formation of a new world bloc of Left Wing elements. Blaming the Communist parties of some unnamed countries (probably having Togliatti in mind) for insufficient courage, Tito asserted that an armed struggle will be needed to attain the Party objectives when public demonstrations become impossible.

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This is an authentic interpretation, by the host of the new Communist organization, of its published objectives on how "to exchange the experiences" and in case of necessity "to co-ordinate the activities" of the Communist parties. Tito will supply Togliatti with his own experiences on how to seize power and, in case of necessity, will co-ordinate the activity of Yugoslav Communists with those of Italy.

This will become much easier after the current withdrawal of the British and American troops from Italy. For the first time since the war, Italy and Yugoslavia will soon be in direct contact. Until now the Allied troops have stood as a buffer between the two countries.

From now on, Tito will have an open field to send unlimited quantities of arms and supplies to Italian Communists and to assign "his democratic fighters" to increase the ranks of Longo's 30,000 Partisans. Northern Italy is within easy reach of Tito and once the contact with the Italian Communists is solidly established there the French Comrades, in their turn, can be helped without great difficulty.

In the south it will be a question of timing as to when the Communists from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania will move to co-ordinate their action with Markos Vafiadis -- the Greek "Tito" -- and his Communist Bands.

The new Communist organization has revived the old Comintern but with a more definite objective, ultimately designed to bring the whole European Continent under Soviet domination. The old Comintern had the rather vague aim of furthering a world proletarian revolution. In the terms of Tito's speech of September 28, the objective of the new Comintern is to promote armed struggle when public demonstrations, strikes and sabotage are no longer sufficient.

This speech was no mere oratorical manifestation. A trusted Soviet official like Tito would not have dared to make comments on high Communist policy a few days before the publication of such an important document, unless he had been instructed to do so. Tito has given the explanation of the importance of the new Comintern. It will be ignored only by those who desire to be fooled.

Constantin Fotitch, formerly representative of Yugoslavia on the Council of the League of Nations, was the Ambassador of that country in Washington before and during the war.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 42

By Frank C. Hanighen October 15, 1947

The Eisenhower boom is a phenomenon which springs largely from the increasingly troubled foreign situation. Since, for better or worse, generals have come to the fore as experts on foreign policy as well as military affairs, it is logical that Eisenhower's name should be pressed as "the man who", etc. Indeed, during the past few months, we have noted that politicians have been privately but very seriously discussing the possibility that by next spring a military man may rival, if not outdistance, the various civil candidates for the Republican nomination; especially, they add, if the foreign situation worsens. They are inclined to forecast a climate of popular opinion in which a prominent general's name would have (as one big party figure put it) "electric results".

That atmospheric condition has not yet appeared and the Eisenhower boom is so far hardly a landslide. It is soundly pointed out by political observers that no important group has come out for (and behind) the General; and that his strategic position among the other rather -- shall we say? -- "journey-worn" hopefuls derives some advantage from the fact that he is not an "active" candidate and coyly waits to be "called" by the people. However, his speech to be delivered in his native state of Kansas later this month may place him in the category of the others whose itinerant activities are a measure of their political aspirations.

In any case, his name is out in front, and therefore he stands open for sniping and criticism, on the matter of his qualifications for high electoral office. The Chicago Tribune, which enjoys no little influence in Illinois and the surrounding area, has recently seen fit to revive the memory of an article about the General which appeared in the United Nations World last March. The article claims that Eisenhower sold the idea of the Morgenthau Plan for pastoralization of Germany to the Secretary of the Treasury (who is commonly regarded as the author) and to President Roosevelt. It was at first reported that the General confirmed the story, then it was reported that he had denied it. The Tribune claims that friends of Eisenhower originally thought that his role in developing the plan would swell his popularity. But today, there seems to be an embarrassed silence in the Eisenhower camp about this subject. Nor is there much stress placed on Eisenhower's role as ruler of occupied Germany. Perhaps it is feared that the history of the debacle in Germany since the end of the war may stand in contrast to the highly successful handling of the occupation of Japan by General MacArthur, himself a dark horse in the Presidential field.

Another possible chink in the Eisenhower armor is his record as Chief of Staff. No criticism on this score has yet arisen, but neither have any floral tributes been noticeable. If the General should allow himself to be drawn into a controversy about the responsibility for the present Army weakness, there is quite a vocal body on Capitol Hill that could adequately retort. The stock explanation by the General Staff of the present lamentable state of the Army has been lack of a universal military training law and penny-pinching by Congress. Members of Congress might answer that five billion in peacetime is a lot of money to spend, and, by the way, how efficiently was it spent?

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General Wedemeyer's report on China (see NMG, Sept. 17, 1947) still remains unpublished, by State Department orders. The Department reportedly considered releasing it in expurgated form, but finally decided against this procedure. General Wedemeyer remains silent on the reasons for the suppression, but much discussion of the matter and many explanations are offered. One of these advanced by well-

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informed observers is that the State Department, among other considerations, fears that publication would further envenom relations with Soviet Russia.

According to recent advices from Nanking, the statement issued by General Wedemeyer during his China trip was expurgated. Before release the statement was sent to Secretary of State Marshall who deleted a number of passages which excoriated the role of the Chinese Communists in the present situation. As may be recalled, the high light of the Wedemeyer statement was its criticism of various reactionary Nationalist elements, and this served to discourage many friends of Nationalist China. If the statement had been printed in its entirety, it is claimed the public would have benefited by a balanced and clearer appraisal of the whole Chinese situation.

Despite his independence, Wedemeyer is still high in Administration esteem. It is learned that he has been asked to take General Clay's post as commander in Germany -- if Clay elects to resign. There have been many rumors of Clay's desire to retire, especially since his recent arrival in Washington.

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Briefs ---- Raymond Moley in his column (Washington Star, October 12) strikes a constructive note: "Finally, the concern of Americans should be a clearer definition of our own point of view. We cannot be merely anti-Comintern. We must be pro-something, and that something must transcend the generalities of freedom and democracy. The materials for an American manifesto are at hand. We must, in co-operation with those all over the world who are now under attack, raise an ideological standard of our own."

---- The Reds still have a hold on the preachers and teachers, not to mention student bodies. We have frequently pointed out the failure of those who advocated the traditional principles of the Republic, to sway the "intelligentsia"; while such organs as the Nation and New Republic have strong influence in that quarter. Howard Norton of the Baltimore Sun went with Henry Wallace on the latter's speaking tour and reports that "the clergy like him" and "his talks to preachers' groups have become standard routine in all the big centers he has visited". Norton reports that the former Vice-President "talked to 4,000 at Brown . . . 2,500 at Yale, 5,000 at Harvard, 4,000 at the University of New Hampshire". His advisers, says Norton, want him to talk to more "meetings of preachers and teachers and others in a position to influence sentiment".

---- Virtual confiscation of all personal belongings of Japan's wealthiest families (already denuded of their fortunes), not directly necessary for daily existence, has been ordered by the anti-trust division of the American occupation in Japan (Washington Times-Herald, October 8). This report has stirred protests from those who advocate strict observance of international law. They point out that the measure is in direct violation of Article 46 of the Second Hague Convention.

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The tidelands oil controversy is due for a revival in coming months, judging by all the signs and portents. The Supreme Court on October 13 refused rehearing of arguments about its decision of last June, when it gave the Federal Government jurisdiction over the submerged oil lands of California. But those who oppose Federal ownership of these offshore lands and who want the rights to remain in the hands of the several states expect to have their innings ere long.

These elements will have at least several resolutions presented in Congress to get rid of Federal ownership of offshore oil. Senator Moore of Oklahoma is expected to hold hearings on the resolutions before many weeks. Senator McCarran reportedly will press a "quit claim" bill along the same lines as his bill for state ownership which passed the 79th Congress but was vetoed by the President. The "States'

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Rights" crowd are inclined to be relieved by certain stipulations which Attorney General Clark and Secretary of the Interior Krug have recently made, the effect of which is to preserve the status quo ante the Supreme Court decision until Congress passes on the matter.

The advocates of Federal ownership, on the other hand, are beginning to raise their voices. One of them, former Secretary Ickes, has already assailed the action of Clark and Krug, saying the two Cabinet members are "in contempt of Supreme Court". This school of thought will probably try to arouse interest among voter elements which want money for reclamation projects. For, if the Federal Government holds these oil properties, an estimated 52 per cent of the royalties from leases to private operators will be allocated to reclamation projects. Also, some small California operators who hold old leases are reportedly preparing court action to nullify the Clark-Krug stipulations. Finally, it is expected that suits will be filed, by Federal ownership advocates, in Louisiana and Texas to assert Federal rights to offshore oil lands in those states. The pot should soon begin to boil.

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One of the reasons why the President is not inclined to summon Congress into immediate special session is probably the question of reduction of taxes, which would undoubtedly receive much Congressional attention at a moment when the Executive asks for more funds for foreign aid. And one reason why Congress is interested in a tax cut appears in a release which Congressman Howard Buffett (Nebr.) has sent to his constituents:

"During the war state and local tax levies were held down with admirable firmness. In 1939, local taxes totaled about seven and a half billions. By 1945 these levies had only increased to nine billions, despite new valuations and new construction. In other words the wartime increase in local taxes was only 20 per cent. From 1939 to 1945 federal taxes increased from less than five billions to over 40 billions. That was an increase of 700 per cent. . . .

"Now I come to a contrast that may surprise you. For Douglas County, Nebraska, the total increase in state and local taxes for 1948 amounts to two and a half millions. Yet the federal tax cut vetoed by President Truman would have lowered individual federal taxes in Douglas County by $9,643,000 in 1948. In other words, the tax cut approved by Congress would have offset Douglas County tax increases with seven millions to spare. The vetoed income tax reduction would have kept in Douglas County taxpayers' pockets almost four times as much as local tax increases are taking out. Other Nebraska counties are similarly affected."

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General Clay is at present in Washington and has reported on Germany to the White House. It is probable that he has not failed to mention a Russian practice in their zone, which is rarely mentioned in the American press. The following recent item in the Berlin Neue Zeitung, licensed by the American military authorities, throws light on Russion recruiting of German officers.

"The registrations [of German officers by Russians] are ever-increasing in scope. Recently all officers living in Annaberg County in the Ore mountains [Erzgebirge] had to register with the Soviet commander of the county. In the course of the registration of former Army personnel in Ammendorf, the police paid personal calls on Air Force pilots and told them it was pointless for them to attempt to escape. In that case some other member of the family would be called up or the family would lose its food ration card. After the registrations in Halle were completed, some former officers were immediately called up. The local police president has admitted this fact. Officers were signed up singly at Soviet offices, supposedly 'on a voluntary basis'."

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Book Events

Decentralize for Liberty, by Thomas Hewes. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., $3.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

The great social dilemma of our time might, I believe, be logically stated thus: (a) In an industrial society the mass of mankind cannot have both economic security and liberty; therefore (b) if we choose security, we must sacrifice liberty; or (c) if we choose liberty, we must accept insecurity. Is it possible to escape this dilemma? I think it is a rule of logic that dilemmas cannot be evaded, that the only hope of the disputant who finds himself trapped in one is to demolish the major premise from which the horns, or unhappy alternatives, have been projected; in other words by proving that it is not a real or valid dilemma. This in effect is what Mr. Hewes has attempted; he wishes to show that liberty and security (as we use the term today) are not necessarily irreconcilable and that we are not obliged to choose between democracy and wage-slavery on the one side and socialism and State-slavery on the other. He offers a third choice the nature of which is sufficiently indicated by the title of his book.

Still, it might be well to rehearse the argument whereby the major premise of our dilemma has been established. Under the conditions created by the industrial revolution and by the mechanisms of finance capitalism the inevitable tendency of unregulated competition is toward monopolies which are themselves destructible of free industry and free competition. That is to say power machinery and the new division of labor enabled the factory owner to eliminate the individual producer, the large industry to absorb the small one, the powerful industry to extend its operations into other fields. As the scale of these operations enlarges the domination of industry passes to a few bankers and financiers. This process whereby ownership and economic power are concentrated into progressively fewer hands is necessarily accompanied by the multiplication of a class which, possessing no capital, has nothing to sell but its labor, in short a proletariat.

The cumulative psychological and moral wreckage of this process, which is destructive of all tradition, engenders a revolutionary spirit. The workers, aware of their individual impotence against the monopolists, seek power in collective action. But here again the monopolistic tendency asserts itself. The trade unions follow the same pattern of expansion and unification, and presently the control of striking and bargaining power passes to a handful of individuals. The control of a vast and powerful union may even lead in the end to the virtual control of a basic industry by a single individual. Meanwhile, the increasing insecurity of existence for an increasing proportion of the population gives rise to a demand for government intervention and for amelioration in such forms as social insurance and guaranteed employment; but it is soon evident that these require a planned economy and that a planned economy means rigidly controlled economy. To make the necessary allocations of production and labor the government must be permitted to prescribe where each citizen shall live and the place and conditions of his employment. Since this innovation will not be equally advantageous to all citizens, some may be expected to resist it, and coercion, perhaps in the form of systematic terror, will be necessary. And thus capitalism finds its teleological fulfillment in totalitarianism.

Such is the dilemma Mr. Hewes has here undertaken to demolish. He presents "a plan of action", applicable under American conditions, which will preserve capitalism while eliminating the social maladies to which it has given rise.

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